

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-20

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DRAFTED BY P:ELPECK:RMS

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S/S- MR. GAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 224034

TOPOL 26

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (PORTER, WILLIAM J.)

SUBJ: FOREIGN AFFAIRS PRESS BRIEFINGS--NOV 13, 1973

STATE

1. TRAVELS - MR. VEST STATED HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD TO THE SECRETARY'S PRESENT ITINERARY NOR, IN RESPONSE TO A DIRECT QUESTION, DID HE KNOW OF ANY PLANS FOR THE SECRETARY TO VISIT CANADA IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE NOTED THAT MR. SISCO WAS IN BONN AND THAT HIS SCHEDULE INCLUDED VISITS TO LONDON, BRUSSELS AND PARIS.

2. MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE - HE SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO CORROBORATE SPECIFICALLY REPORTS THAT A CONFERENCE WOULD COMMENCE ON DEC 9 IN GENEVA. HOWEVER, HE DID REFER TO THE GENERAL TIME FRAME OUTLINED BY THE SECRETARY IN PEKING.

3. SIX-POINT AGREEMENT - ON VARIOUS QUESTIONS REGARDING THE AGREEMENT SIGNED THIS PAST WEEKEND, VEST STATED HE ASSUMED THE PARTIES WILL PURSUE A PRAGMATIC APPROACH. HE DECLINED TO CHARACTERIZE MRS. MEIR'S SPEECH TO THE KNESSET BUT ADDED LATER THAT IT WAS NOT SURPRISING THAT THERE WERE SOME DIFFICULTIES IN INSTITUTING THE SIX RATHER GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

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4. OTHER MIDDLE EAST MATTERS - VEST WOULD NOT COMMENT ON FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT'S SPEECH WHICH CHARGED

THAT THE US AND THE USSR HAD QTE BRUTALLY UNQTE PUSHED ASIDE EUROPE IN IMPOSING A MIDDLE EAST CEASEFIRE. FURTHER, VEST STATED HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY US CONTACTS WITH THE NETHERLANDS ON THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO NOR OF ANY PROMISE THE SECRETARY MAY HAVE MADE TO SADAT TO FINANCE CLEARANCE OF THE SUEZ CANAL.

5. PRC - REGARDING A TOAST THE SECRETARY MADE IN PEKING, VEST SUGGESTED THAT PRC-US RELATIONS HAVE A SUSTAINED BASE IN TERMS OF US NATIONAL INTERESTS.

WHITE HOUSE

1. THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING WAS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO DOMESTIC CONCERNS.

DEFENSE

1. INDIAN OCEAN ACTIVITIES - DOD SPOKESMAN JERRY FRIEDHEIM CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT TWO SOVIET SHIPS HAD JUST TRANSITTED THE STRAIT OF MALACCA FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN. HE LATER STATED THAT THE CARRIER HANCOCK TASK GROUP WAS IN THE VICINITY OF DIEGO GARCIA BUT WAS NOT IN PORT.

2. OTHER NAVAL ACTIVITIES - ASKED THE POSITION OF THE DESTROYER USS ADAMS QTE IN THE RED SEA UNQTE, FRIEDHEIM RESPONDED THAT IT WAS QTE STILL THERE; WE WANT TO HOLD OPEN THE OPTION FOR IT TO MOVE IN AND OUT OF THE RED SEA UNQTE. FRIEDHEIM DECLINED TO COMMENT ON THE QUESTION OF ISRAELI SHIPPING PASSING THROUGH THE BAB AL MANDAB. HE SAID THE SOVIET MEDITERRANEAN FLEET WAS QTE STILL IN THE 80'S, BUT CLOSER TO 80 UNQTE.

3. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL - FRIEDHEIM VOICED HIS BELIEF THAT THE MATTER OF QUANTIFYING THE GRANT COMPONENT OF RECENT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL WAS NOT YET RESOLVED. CASEY
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